The Punishment for Hannibal Lecter

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The Punishment for Hannibal Lecter

by carrofelicia

Summary

Hannibal crawled his way out of the Bad Place (Hell) to find Will Graham in the Good Place. Little did he know, Will Graham wished to become a simpleton to stop the nightmares.

The doctor became a full time nanny of the mentally unsound Will Graham. The real meaning of his love will be tested, whether he likes it or not.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Hannibal was welcomed by the Architect of the “Good Place” neighborhood where he knew Will Graham would be in. The Being, who did not bother wearing his human suit to somehow intimidate the legendary Hannibal Lecter, has stiffened since the news of his eventual arrival. Apparently, no method could torture the cannibal. He finds entertainment in despair, and because he knew of karma, he prepared himself of the same despair while he was still a human.

Adapt. Evolve. Overcome. Those were Hannibal’s greatest motto, and these exact words made him endure all the tortures and win trials against demons who were forced to give something to him. If the almighty gods really wanted to torture humans, they should have removed their abilities to do those very characteristics of humanity.

He won a psychological game against the Architect of the ‘Bad Place” neighborhood where he ended up to. Of course he would end up in hell, he’s a goddamn narcissistic people eater. After winning against the Being, he has been allowed to rule over the place. Hannibal Lecter had another idea. He asked the Judge to bring him to the place where Will Graham is peacefully living. A lot of deliberation had happened—so bureaucratic, so humanly—that Hannibal wondered if this plane of existence is even as high as ‘the afterlife’ the Greco-Roman Christianity, Buddhism, and Islam, were talking about. The logic of this place is low, just a little notch higher than the human realm, that he cannot see anything barely divine.

This is not yet the afterlife, just the opening of it. And according to evidences and accounts of the higher beings he met, humans normally last 200 human years in this plane. It is divided into two segments; the good place, and the bad place. The ‘Good Place’ is like Human World 2.0, but more designed in favor of each citizen. They can still see so much traces of human culture in it, but there are small introductions of higher realm terminologies and events. It’s like a preparation for a soul before they enter the real human afterlife, which requires deeper logic in order to be understood. The bad place is merely a purification chamber, where the bad souls get tortured so much that they repent. When the repenting tortures work, they are sent back to the human world for reincarnation, but as animals. When animals die, they are sent to a different plane of existence, entirely different from the Good Place and Bad Place. If they don’t repent, their souls are destroyed.

Hannibal being in the bad place is no shock, but he never wanted the two options he has as a citizen of it. He survived with blood, sweat, and space-time grime, and now he’s in the office of the Architect of this “Good Place” neighborhood.

“When they told me your existence destroyed a lot of protocols, I never thought those destructions would be so influential that they would let you in here.” The Being said.

“And here I am now.” Hannibal smiled. “May I have better skin?”

In a flick of the being’s finger, Hannibal’s grime-covered skin became clean, and his tattered blanket that served as clothes were replaced by his favorite three-piece suit.

“Thank you. How did you know this is my favorite?”

The Being waved his hands dismissively, but politely nonetheless. “Nah, I do not know what you look like in your limited human eye sight. I just gave you a cloth that could project what you want to wear at the moment. You can change it anytime anywhere. You don’t have to groom with that either, but of course you can take a bath if you like.”

“Wonderful. May I be led to Will Graham’s neighborhood?”

The Being’s expression changed, and Hannibal did not read it from its face (because the Being has no defined face a normal human can comprehend), but from the sudden change of their environment. The Being’s office, is of course, just a fragment of its mind.

“Will Graham, that human. I heard you caused his death. Poor being.”

“Can I see him, after all?”

“Of course you can. But let me tell you, he’s different from what you know.”

*

The Being decided to finally wear his human skin to walk along the ‘Good Place’ neighborhood Centro, which looks like a street in Venice (minus the flooding). There are different streets that lead away from the Centro, and each have different landscapes, climates, and architectures. Each street contains one to three humans, usually couples, usually families, but loners are more abundant in the Good Place.

“Is Will Graham alone?” Hannibal asked.

“No. He’s with a daughter?”

“Abigail?”

“Yes. But on her requests, she became a cat with a sole job of sleeping, reading books, and cuddling with Will.”

“Very peaceful. She deserves that.” Hannibal mused, but then that led him to another notion. “But when did she die? Did she follow us right away?”

“Oh no.” The Being chuckled. “She followed after 60 years. Not without becoming the best Psychiatrist in the world. Nobel Prize winner. Has her own bust statue in University of New Orleans. You must be proud of her.”

Hannibal smiled warmly. “Very.”

“She killed you, you know.”

“Another thing I’m proud of.”

They turned to a street that began to transition the whole environment into a barren oaken field. Trees are planted every 10 meters, and the rest of the land grows golden wild grasses with some traces of lavender and berries here and there. At a distance, they can hear a healthy flow of stream. In the middle of the field, there stands Will Graham's abode, a combination of his former house in Wolftrap and Hannibal's house in Baltimore. Very American middle class gothic.

This is so much like Will Graham, with a little bit of his own influence.

What Hannibal wonders, though, is the apparent lack of dogs. Maybe animals, except to the humans who wished to be, are not allowed in the realm since they have a realm of their own.

The being knocked on the door for etiquette's sake, but he knows they could just teleport inside. Luckily, he acquired this teleportation ability from one of the demons. There's no need to use it, not when the door has been opened. The one behind it is not a human, but a black cat with intelligent stare evident in its bright blue eyes. The cat was composed, until she saw who's behind their neighborhood Architect. It ran away further inside, not in fear, but in physical preparation. She probably wants to protect Will, unlike last time.

"Abigail." The Being called. "I'm sorry but there are certain… unorthodox things… that happened from the higher ups, and Hannibal Lecter here will be a permanent guest of your abode."

Cat Abigail's head peeked from one of the rooms that awfully looks like Hannibal's library. He remembered how that place was once Abigail's solace.

She meowed aggressively.

The Being was taken aback. "Well, I'm sorry for not having enough god-like powers. I'm not god myself."

"What did she say?" Hannibal asked.

Another meow goes. Threatening.

"She said she doesn't want to be understood by you. Only I and Will Graham can understand her."

Hannibal nodded in understanding. He set his arms behind him calmly, then walked towards the library space. Abigail cat tried to attack his face by flinging herself on the air that normal cats would never achieve, but unfortunately for the feline, Hannibal only teleported behind her.

Abigail Cat faced him immediately and growled in frustration. He meowed continuously and aggressively towards the man, as if in derogatory. Maybe it was derogatory.

"Woah, I'm not translating that." The Being, who stayed on the foyer, backed away, ready to leave the newly acquired headache that is the Graham household. Having this Architect job was easy. They will only need to design an environment based on the human's preference,

then leave them alone in peace. Very easy. However, maybe the Being will know the full experience of it while dealing with this abnormality.

Hannibal smiled down to Abigail, “My dear, I could wish a higher being to let me understand you, but since it was your wish not to be understood by me, probably to have private conversation with Will in front of me, then so be it. I will respect your wishes. It’s the least I could do for you.”

Abigail was silent for a minute, then in hurried thinking, she bolted on the hallway towards one of the darker rooms, leaving him and the being alone.

“Um, well, I think it’s time I introduce Will Graham to you.” The being said, face turning serious.

“There’s no need for that.”

“Aren’t you a Psychiatrist? Or are you just a class A dick?” The Being smirked. “You know Will Graham had trauma because of you, and you just want to barge in on his property like you own the shit? You are some Thomas Harris villain, Hannibal.”

The Being, who chose a human suit of a teenage androgynous human with unisex Victorian fashion sense (vest, short, and high socks), has suddenly become more threatening. Hannibal wasn’t threatened, but the Being did make sense. In surrender, he nodded. “You’re right. I apologize.”

“At least you’re polite.” The Being said as it brushed pass him towards the hallway Abigail Cat bolted on.

Upon reaching the room, they were met by the beautiful figure of Will Graham sitting by the window, Abigail Cat sitting on his lap. He’s wearing his formal, but comfortable ensemble of off-red dress shirt and straight-fitting slacks. He is as regal as Hannibal knew.

Hannibal stepped in the room in trance. He missed the man immensely. He was all he thought of everyday for 60 years in the Bad Place, and now, seeing him personally, so fine, so peaceful, so alive, curdled his heart and shook his entire being.

God, he loves Will Graham so much.

“Wait.” The Being said gently. “Like I told you, Will Graham is very different from how you knew him.”

Hannibal stopped from walking, realizing how Will had not stirred from his obvious intrusion. “What is wrong with him?”

“It’s not what’s wrong with him.” The Being said, smug. “It’s what’s right with him.”

Hannibal faced the Being in frustration. “What did he wish to have, or rather, what did he wish to be gone.”

The Being smiled. “He wished for a simple, empty mind.”

In one swift movement, the air around the Being changed, and their skin change its suit to the likeness of Doctor Alana Bloom, wearing her sharpest suit, reddest lipstick, and most elegant walking cane. The most intimidating he’s seen of the woman.

“This is the Bad Place.” Hannibal said in grief.

“For you.” The Being said, and it grates Hannibal even more for it uses Alana’s I’m-going-to-torture-you voice. “The council has decided an unorthodox way of punishing you, Hannibal Lecter. The only way to torture you is to put you in a dilemma using Will Graham. Since this is still the Good Place for Will and Abigail, we will prioritize their comfort over yours.”

“But this was my deal.”

“Of course. And a deal is a deal. We just took advantage of it.”

The Being vanished, but its voice could still be heard. “Besides, Hannibal Lecter, you can defy all odds, can you not?” And it was followed by Alana’s fading laugh.

Hannibal faced back to the two figures sitting by the gothic floor to ceiling window. The room is dark, illuminated only by the said aperture, and its light directly hits Will’s empty but peaceful expression. Abigail is still on his lap, being petted like a princess.

So what if Will’s mind, his most favorite thing, is not here anymore? This man is still Will, his most precious beloved. His face alone stirred a loving sense of responsibility from him.

“Will.” Hannibal called. “Would you like dinner? I know we don’t get hungry, but eating in a dining area is still a lovely activity we could share as family.”

“Not hungry.” Will simply said in his low and soft voice. If Hannibal is right, there is not a sign of his usual intelligence and attitude in that simple voice.

“Then what do you like to do now?”

“Sit.”

“Aside from sitting?”

“Sit.”

“Alright.” Hannibal nodded. “Then sit we do.”

They sat for hours, Hannibal looking at Will smiling and frowning every now and then. Sometimes, Hannibal tries to strike a conversation, but much to his dismay, he is only answered by simple, sometimes totally unrelated words. He went to Abigail’s library to catch some books, but the cat followed him and pranked him mercilessly. Every time he finds an interesting book, it becomes “Twilight” as soon he touches them. The cat meows, and Hannibal can at least interpret that as a laugh.

“At least it’s not Jane Austen. I can actually handle a modern contemporary of inaccurate, over-mystified vampire romance, but dear god, not Austen. Unrealistic puppy love is what I despise the most.” He whispered to himself.

Abigail Cat heard this, so she made all books an Austen novel.

When it has gone dark, Hannibal coax Will into a bath. It was not needed, but Hannibal is a man of routine. He took one of his own after Will messily splished and splashed all over the bathroom. Hannibal spent 2 hours cleaning the messes he made. He could have wished for a faster cleaning process, but he could not summon a dimensional assistant – an all-knowing, all-producing, butler-like information delivery system– to help him clean. He remembered that only the citizens of the Good Place can do that, and he’s just a guest.

He did try telling Will to summon a dimensional assistant, but Will summoned their butler he named “Winston” to hand him a cactus. Very nice.

“Thank you, Will.” Hannibal said sarcastically. “That was very helpful.”

So Will ordered 50 more succulents.

*

Hannibal woke up earlier than the rest of the household, as he usually do. He’s thankful for having a soft cot for a bed, not a literal bushes of nails and thorned roses (he learned to love that bed, eventually). He’s thankful for seeing the sky through the wide windows, not a painfully red sky through a crack from a turd-lined cement. He’s thankful for having Will and Abigail near him, not only meeting them in his mind palace.

Then again, Mind Palace Will is more intelligent, more abrasive, and cleverer. This Will, the realest Will this universe could ever have, is a simpleton he never knew. Abigail is an attitude-ridden cat who finds joy on subtly torturing him. At least he tricked her into giving him all collections of Austen Novels, even the novels Jane Austen could have written if she had not died. It was the most wonderful gift from his only daughter. Although, it was her internalized misogyny that made her believe the manliest Hannibal Lecter would never enjoy a ‘girly’ read. It seems she had not read an Austen Novel then. It’s never too late to educate an 80 year old youngster.

Nevertheless, he raised from the bed with vigor and direction. He will serve Will Graham even if it kills him.

Then again, he’s beginning to wonder if his love for ‘Mentally well Will Graham’ is still a part of this equation.

“Good morning, Will.” He greeted Will from his bed.

The former profiler gently wakes. “No. Is night.” Then bundled himself with blankets.

Suddenly, as if on que, the morning sky has turned into night time. Of course Will and Abigail also holds the settings of the environment. With Will’s current state of mind, the

seasons may be as random as they get.

Hannibal sighed. “But you cannot just sleep all day.”

“I CAAAAAN!” Will loudly whined under his blankets.

Abigail cat entered the room like a civil guard hearing a royalty being attacked. She meowed intensely, as if it was a battle cry, then attacked Hannibal Lecter’s face. Hannibal tried to be as composed as he can, so he stood still as Abigail stays on the top of his head while scratching his face.

“Are you happy now?”

If he was not mistaken, he could hear Will Graham’s muffled chuckle.

Of course, any simpleton could find this amusing.

*

“What are you reading, Abigail?” Hannibal asked as soon as he entered the sitting room, Will Graham’s favorite room. It honestly looks like a combination of Will Graham’s Wolftrap living room, and his own sitting room in Baltimore. He’s touched.

Abigail did not answer, only growled lowly. The page turned on itself, obviously through the telekinetic abilities she wished for. Hannibal loomed over the black cat to read the header of one page, and lord did the disgust spiraled his eyes.

“Frederick Chilton’s analysis of me? Very uneducated Abigail. I expected more from you.”

The cat let out a laugh in cat-manner.

“You should read my rebuttal of it. It hasn’t been published, but I bet you can summon it from my drawer in Florence.”

Hannibal heard her meow lethargically, as if saying, *Nah Thanks, fuck you*

“Speaking of Frederick Chilton,” He stride towards the chair opposite to Will Graham, “I once talked to him when you were still in prison.”

Hannibal could have sworn he saw a glint in Will’s eyes, but he dismissed it.

“… He said you talked nothing but ‘Hannibal, Hannibal, Hannibal’. I was touched, but please, I would like to hear anything you can say about your sessions with Frederick Chilton in BSHCI.”

Will Graham slowly faced him with confused look. “What’s a Hannibal?”

Hannibal had not bothered to hide his hurt. Because why would he even need to stay composed in front of a man who cannot interpret the *simplest damn evidence* like he usually do. If this was his Will Graham, they would be in a witty banter by now, either bitter or light.

Anything by his Will Graham.

But this is not his Will Graham.

*

Hannibal continued his routine, despite it being destroyed by Abigail's pranks or Will's moodiness. Sometimes, he only lets out a hurtful chuckle as to stay composed in front of Abigail. He takes Will to bath, gets him to sleep, cooks for him, and what not. None of them ever gets appreciated, but that's alright. As long as he's with his family.

One evening, the Being knocked. Hannibal answered the door to the same androgynous-looking teenager with Victorian school-kid attire, this time wearing a kilt. The Being let itself in.

"How is your happy communication moments with family?" It cheerfully inquired.

"Pleasant."

"Oh, no need to be modest with me. I know everything that happens here anyway. Do not worry, though, I do not have the same judgement as your normal fellow humans, so even if you do the sex, I would not mind."

Hannibal only scowled, but produced some cookies from the kitchen anyway. "Then I guess you know what's really going on."

"Yes of course." The Being smiled. "To be fair, you have no right to complain." In the same flick of finger, the Being's skin turned into Frederick Chilton, his eyes more intelligent than the usual, and in addition, more irritating. What's more irksome is that the Being mentions Will's full name the same way the real Chilton does. "Will Graham wished to be a simpleton to have peace, a thing he failed to have because of you. Are you going to act like a first-world over-privileged brat and whine that you did not deserve this punishment?"

Hannibal fell silent, guilty to be caught.

"If you are tired being a nanny, you can take over your acquired position in the Bad Place as an Architect. To be fair, you make an excellent torturer."

The Being stood up, changing their skin back to its most preferred. "Anytime, Hannibal, you can leave. Just walk out of Graham Street, find the telephone booth in Café Arabica, and call your very own dimensional assistant. You don't need a number, the lines know who you desire to contact. After that, you can be escorted to your own neighborhood, and it can expand into a kingdom if you're really that good."

Hannibal gave a long thought, but he dismissed it for the mean time. "Am I the first human soul to gain the rights of being an Architect?"

"Why ask?"

"To have someone to compare notes with."

The Being chuckled. “Don’t flatter yourself. You’re only the third. Well, you are the first human-turned-Architect for the Bad Place, so that’s something.”

With that, the Being vanished.

Hannibal sighed. He set his palms on his hips and let himself slouch while standing. It was a tiring week, a week of being a servant to some simpleton while he has an option to be a king. He dismissed the thought again, his sense of responsibility over Will Graham more important than a measly position in the barely-afterlife.

He glanced down the cookie plate to put it away, but instead, he saw a black cat staring at him with those endearing blue orbs. She made a mess from the cookie plate, but he appreciates that she finished them all. Abigail continued looking at him, with a blank expressive expression, like a normal housecat demanding an upsies.

With a smile, he picked up Abigail and petted her head as he settles her down on his strong arms. “Don’t worry, Abigail, I won’t leave. Not after everything I’ve done.”

Abigail meowed, hurt and scolding.

“No, it’s not exactly from regret.”

She meows lowly.

“It wasn’t out of pity, either.”

Hannibal settled Abigail in her library, gave her some more of his homemade cookies and a glass of milk, then went straight to Will’s sitting room for his nightly bath.

“My dear, it’s time for your bath.” Hannibal gently said while peering on his door.

“Not dear.” Will said seriously. This baby talks are always produced by Will’s normally deep voice, so it could be funny if the circumstances were different. For now, Hannibal is tired.

“Come again?”

“Me, Will. Not dear.”

Hannibal only nodded, not in great necessity to explain himself. After sighing, he took Will’s hands from the armrest, but Will retracted it, with force much greater than the usual. “NOT DEAR!!!”

“Alright, Will Graham!” Hannibal interjected with a little angry tone. “Let’s take a bath!”

“No! Pervert!”

That’s it! Hannibal thought. He doesn’t know where this simpleton would have gotten this concept, but he guessed there it is, but he will not deal with this anymore. "Alright then! Don’t take a bath. Why do I even bother? We don’t need to groom ourselves here. We don’t

need to eat, to sleep, to breathe… We only exist… and… all I ever want to do is to have a life with you, Will Graham."

Hannibal's voice broke upon saying Will's name. The accumulated hurt came from 60 years of afterlife longing, 2 years of human life pinning, and infinite amount of passion he has for the profiler who could see him, know him… he who was given a rare gift, but didn't want it.

It wasn't this simpleton.

*

Hannibal vaguely remembers an old woman in one of his therapy sessions as a Psychiatrist. Her rich distant relatives put her in Hannibal Lecter's afternoon tea time to, somehow and eventually, convince the rich old woman to stop putting all her hard-earned money unto caring for her poor old husband, who was suffering from dementia.

Hannibal is not a moral doctor anyway, so he told the Madame that she must not put herself down for a man who has regressed into a childish bed-wetter. After three sessions, the Madame put the man away in public senior care system, where they all know old people are being mistreated.

In the fourth session, the Madame was so proud of her decision, and she was happy that her family empowered her right to live as gloriously as she must. Hannibal, of course, knows the relatives only wanted bigger inheritance. He will not share that information for the heck of it. It wasn't the first time Hannibal actually destroys a patient's life anyway.

In the fifth session, the Madame cried. She recounted all the times she spent with her husband, who was the gentlest, most loving man she had ever met. Most men during her time hated that she is more powerful and smarter than them, so she was despised in their middle class social circle. For Hannibal, Middle class social circles have more heinous rules, not because they are rational rules, but because people wants to be above by having a point of exclusion. They excluded the Madame for being a smart woman, except this Italian Signore, who was taken by her beauty, and stayed for her overall intelligence, grace, and kindness. He was a former mafia, tough-looking, with scars that tell a story or two. Everyone was afraid, but not her who saw the gentleness in those eyes. They were a perfect couple. For the positive reinforcement from her ever-loving husband, she gained the confidence to become a head programmer in NASA. He stayed at home to look after their children, but not once has he felt emasculated.

Even when he was beginning to lose his mind, the Madame still felt the love that they shared, because in the end of the day, he is the man she loved, he is the man who loved her. She couldn't point out what can be found endearing from a silent man who wets himself, but his eyes are still the same. Still gentle, still loving, still… cute.

After that day, the Madame took her husband out from the system and they lived happily ever after. So he heard. Her distant relatives weren't happy, though. The private home care was so expensive that they ended up poor. Nonetheless they are together, and that is all that matters.

Hannibal stayed on his bed awake, thinking of that short story. It warmed his heart to some degree.

*

The next morning was different. For some reasons, Will Graham has become more difficult. Abigail had stopped pranking, thank god, but she is not exactly helpful sleeping all day like a real cat. She only wakes up to read and eat.

Hannibal had not put Will through any of his routine for the day. He believes he deserves the rest, besides, it's not like they will die for not eating. Abigail could just call for the Dimensional assistant for some cookies.

In the sitting room, Hannibal decided to sit in front of him.

"No!" Said Will without looking at him.

"No what?"

"I don't like seeing you."

Hannibal was minutes to snapping, but regained his patience. "Not fond of eye contact, are you?"

Will Graham's eyes glinted again. He finally looked at the doctor donned in three piece suit as always, Will's eyes seething in anger. "Hate you."

"I know." The doctor conceded. The last moments in their human life wasn't exactly pleasant on Will's side. He committed suicide because of Hannibal's insistence. At least now, they cannot die anymore.

"I hate you, I hate you, I hate you, I hate you…"

What a simpleton. Hannibal tried to search Will Graham's eyes for his sanity, or his flavor, or his love, but nothing. His eyes are the same blue, the same mesmerizing blue, but not the same calculating intellectual blue.

"Leave! Leave! Leave!" Will Graham chanted.

Hannibal stayed silent despite the noise. "I remember when I slashed your gut open, my love. I was so heartbroken that I cut a C-section over your stomach to signify the night that I take Abigail away from you, to signify that you are no longer a parent, but you could have been."

Will stopped chanting, and then his eyes accumulated tears that never dropped. Hannibal could have stopped only to appreciate the beauty those waterworks has added to his face, like a prized art piece in the strange gallery of his mind. Hannibal took that image in, but he continued.

"When I told you, that you didn't want my gift, I hope I registered your small 'didn't I'. I hope I stayed with you, took us off to Florence, then created the nice little family we planned.

Maybe without the murder, since apparently hell is real. I hope things turned out differently, Will Graham. I love you."

"Idiot. Idiot. Idiot." Will Graham started chanting again, now with wet, sad, eyes.

"But you are not my Will."

*

That night, Hannibal, who was sleeping in the antechamber of the master's bedroom, was woken up by a loud shout of Will Graham. Hannibal saw Abigail's little black figure bolt across him using her cat-like agility towards Will's bed. When he reached the master's bedroom, he saw Will, soaked in sweat and tears, but most importantly, very lucid.

His eyebrows are knit in terror and deepness, his mouth hung in horror and a very Will Graham-like frown. When Hannibal's figure loomed over, casting darkness to the room by blocking the light from the hallway, Will stared at him, his eyes becoming angrier.

"You…" Will started. "Why are you here?"

The former doctor was taken aback, his breathing almost irregular, very hopeful for finally regaining his beloved's sanity. "Will? Do you know who you are? Where you are? What time is it?"

"I'm not participating in a grounding activity with you, Doctor Lecter, not when space and time don't matter in this realm."

It's him. His sweaty, snarky, attitude-driven Will Graham. Hannibal could not contain himself as he flung his body across the room and hugged the profiler, who stiffened upon his contact. Abigail decided not to ruin the moment, so she stayed on a chair like an observant audience.

Hannibal let go of Will when the smaller man knocked his shoulder lightly. "I said let go."

"I get that you still hate me." Hannibal frowned. "How? How has your sanity come back?"

"It happens. Now get out."

"But Will…"

"I SAID GET OUT!" Will shouted in exasperation.

Hannibal's mind was all over the place, from insisting that he must stay, or respecting Will's wishes. He looked at Abigail, but the cat did not give any expression that she wants to be part of the decision. Hannibal went out silently, troubled, but respectful.

The doctor navigated the hallways, looking for rooms to keep himself in. Of course it's only natural that Will wake up mad, especially with his sanity intact. Hannibal deserved nothing but hatred from the man he tortured, physically and mentally. The Being was right, he's an excellent torturer. Mindlessly, he started heating the stove to cook Silkie chicken in a broth, a classic. In his distraught state he retreats to his mind palace, and since he must focus on

cooking, he only settled with imagining Will Graham leaning his back on the counter next to him.

“You’re cooking me chicken soup.” Imagination-Will stated.

“Yes.”

“Is it for me?”

“Supposedly, if you do not decide to throw it down the floor like the last two times.” He replied, not concerned that he’s really speaking with his audible voice toward the empty air.

Imagination-Will hummed. “We don’t really need to eat, Hannibal.”

“I know.”

“Cooking is your grounding activity. This chicken soup is not for me, it’s for you.”

With that, Imagination-Will vanished. Hannibal sighed, then decided to throw all the chicken soup away. Nobody will eat it anyway. Upon cleaning the kitchen, producing no food, Abigail Cat zoomed inside to nip at the bottom of his slacks. The cat’s eyes are troubled, looking at him with plea. She nipped to pull him towards the hallways, and since Abigail, a powerful cat who has telekinetic abilities, moves with hurry, he concludes it must be an emergency concerning Will.

They run towards the master’s bedroom and Hannibal almost knocked over the door. When they arrived, he saw the Being looking down at Will in argument.

“What’s going on?” Hannibal asked.

“I told you to stay out.” Will said, not looking away from the Being.

“What is going on, anybody, please.”

The Being sighed and flailed his arms in defeat. “This stupid ass human wants me to simplify his mind further.”

“W-what does that mean?”

Abigail also meowed.

“I’m sorry, Abigail, but after this, I cannot take care of you. I suggest you ask for your own street.” Will only said, not even batting an eye to Hannibal.

If Will is not talking to him, then so be it. Hannibal faced the Being. “What is going on?”

“He wants me to simplify his mind Hannibal. Every time he regains his sanity, which happens every 10 years, he asks me to simplify his mind further.”

Will growled. “You don’t really need to explain anything to him. He’s not my husband.”

Hannibal would be lying if that statement did not make him flinch, he would have done anything to be Will Graham's husband, not just in title, but in mind and body. And that is quite impossible when the feelings are not mutual.

"Actually, Will Graham," the Being begins to explain, "He is also an Architect like me. Although he's a newbie, we have the same station here, so I'm just trying to be polite." The Being returned his attention to Hannibal, "Anyway, simplification of the mind will render it present-minded, which means no thinking about the past, no looming regrets, no worrying about the future, no nightmares, and etcetera. A very simple life. But further simplification will erase some of the mind's functions, like ability to analyze the present, ability to decide, ability of consciousness... And I had simplified his mind SIX TIMES! Further simplification will… you know…"

"Would render him think like a new born child." Hannibal stated, gloom and disbelief evident in his voice.

"Well, a toddler, at least. He can still speak. But you get the point." The Being shrugged.

"Will" Hannibal gently faced the man, "I want you to think hard."

"Funny, that is the last thing I want to do."

"How about Abigail?"

"She can find her own street. She should want a street of her own preference."

"And her preference is to be with a father, Will Graham! Can't you see, how she considers a place a Good Place as long as she's with you?"

"You can take her, if you want. You've done that before."

Hannibal closed his eyes in melancholic frustration. He kneeled in front of Will, the way he did before, and collected his hands before kissing them. He kissed gently, softly, and lovingly, and above him, Will Graham cries. "My dear Will."

"I only want to be free from you, from the nightmares you gave me."

"I will take them away."

"Do you love me?"

"Endlessly." Hannibal kissed his fingers again, looking up to his eyes with so much promise.

"Even when I act like a toddler?"

Hannibal's brows furrowed. "Will, please… not that."

Will sighed. "You only love the mind you molded, Hannibal. You don't really love me."

"But this mind you have, dear Will, is beautiful."

“It’s beautiful for you because you can talk to it and agree with you, and if it disagrees with you, it does beautifully so. But not for me, Hannibal. My mind is a scary place full of predatory stags and wendigos. Full of nightmares, full of inconsistencies and darkness. You are the center of my mind, it has never been mine since we met.”

Will fell silent, letting the tears fall as he closes his eyes. Hannibal’s gentle grip loosens until they drop on his sides like jelly.

“I’m sorry, Abigail and Hannibal.” The Being behind him interjected. “But I must abide to the wishes of a citizen. This simplification is the last, though. Because it will seriously fry his mind.”

“There’s no going back.” Will continued.

“No going back.” Hannibal repeated.

*

For the third time that month, Will managed to die despite Hannibal’s best efforts. Dying in the realm only means severely injuring oneself to the point of serious rebooting. It takes three human days before the Being wheels in a fully-recovered Will Graham, crying because of the pain of death. He would become grumpy after the rebooting, and the tantrum has become too much for the doctor. Abigail, poor Abigail, cannot stomach seeing her father figure like this, so she locks herself up in her library.

Hannibal has become a full-time nanny of a childish bed-wetter. Sometimes he thinks about the Madame that took care of her demented husband, and silently prays for her guidance and asks for her patience.

“Will, I think you should not eat that cactus. And stop asking Winston for them.”

Will Graham, who somehow removed his pants, ran away in glee. He threw the pot of cactus towards the window and its glass broke into several pieces, inviting breeze into the house. Speaking of breeze, Will’s unsound mind would sometimes summon random rainclouds, or snow storms, or sand storms, whatever randomness his toddler mind could think of. One time, it rained stinky salmons, and since he himself cannot summon Winston, he cleaned everything for five days! Today, the breeze smells salty, and Hannibal is afraid Will is summoning a salt-water surge. That will be hard to clean.

Since the simplification of Will Graham’s mind, Hannibal never had a decent time to sit down and read a book. He forgets sleep as well because toddler Will Graham figured out it’s alright to stay awake forever. Hannibal unknowingly abandoned his aesthetics and comfort in order to take care of the grown-looking baby.

He misses Will, so after picking up all the glass shards, he sat down in the sitting room adjacent to Will’s usual seat.

“Hard work, isn’t it, Hannibal?” Imagination-Will said, his hair looking divine. It is also worthy to note that this Will Graham is getting darker and darker, and the scarier part?

Hannibal is aware that this mirrors his own mind.

“I would appreciate it if you don’t talk to me today, Will.”

“Why?” Imagination-Will chuckled. “You called me. You let me linger when the real me is off disappointing you. Are you sad again today, my love?”

Somehow, Imagination-Will is also becoming flirtier. This is his undeniable desire.

Hannibal only grumbled.

“You know the difference between you and that Madame, love?”

“Please stop!”

“She loved her husband unconditionally. You, on the other hand, never loved me.”

“My love may be unconventional, but it is true.” Hannibal convinced Imagination-Will, but moreover, he’s convincing himself.

“You only became aware of me not because of love, Hannibal, but because of my potential. And no matter how you express your *goddamn choking love*, you will never see your beloved’s potential come true. So why do you stay?” Imagination-Will smirked and walked near to whisper sweet arousing words on his ears, hardening his member. He felt pathetic.

“You… why are you here? I should be in full control of my mind and not let you poison me, or Will’s memories.”

“Because you are not in your element, Hannibal Lecter, and it’s making you crazy.”

Hannibal could try dismissing that thought way, but he knows he cannot. Imagination-Will is spilling the hurtful truth.

The vixen continues, with the very words he once told that Madame. “You must not put yourself down for a man who has regressed into a childish bed-wetter. You deserve better than that.”

Hannibal spent two days taking very good care of Will Graham. He cleaned the house, the fixed all the damages, and he managed to trick the simpleton Will into telling Winston that he must stay 24/7 to make sure he’s safe. He also left a few letters for Abigail, one of them detailing Will Graham’s routine, and one of them inviting her to live with him in hell. It was only an option, but Hannibal knew the cat will stay with the mongoose.

Hannibal said a final goodbye to the house, but he did not bother saying his goodbyes to Will.

Will Graham interpreted that as a bitter realization that he was never loved.

The former profiler dejectedly gaze at the larger man’s vanishing figure as he walks across the lavender fields. He could teleport, he knows, but Hannibal is probably recuperating by

taking his time. He told the skies to be clear so Hannibal could find his way to the Centro easily. Will strokes Abigail's fur mindlessly.

"You see that, Abby? He never really loved us."

Abigail meowed, and it is automatically translated before Will's hearing. "In his defense, you put so much show to push him away."

"Which was just a test." Will reasoned.

"A very hard test."

When Hannibal is gone from their vision, Will looked down at Abigail's guilty blue eyes. "I know you're still mad at yourself for killing him in cold blood, but Abby, maybe he deserved it. I let him find us, I let him in, but look at him now. He's gone. He will always leave us in the end once he discovers his expectations will never be met. You don't have to feel guilty for a selfish man. He never loved us."

"But was this trial cohabitation only meant for me?" Abigail cat mused. Of course she will figure some things out, she's a world-famous Psychiatrist.

Will Graham smiled, "What can I hide from you, Abby?"

"Did you love him?"

"I still do."

"And how do you feel about that?"

"Pathetic."

The Being, suddenly but expectedly, appeared in front of the two human souls. It smiled, albeit sadly. "Hannibal Lecter is now taking-over that certain Bad Place neighborhood."

"That was fast." Abigail raised her cat-ly brow.

"A man of action, indeed. Perhaps, in five years, he can build a kingdom of torture. He has the mindset of an expansionist. Don't you wish to expand, Grahams?"

"No thanks." Will said. "This simple neighborhood is already too big for us to handle. By the way, thank you for doing your role in this play."

"My utmost pleasure." The Being, or rather, the Architect of the nearest neighborhood, vanished in thin air. They were the closest friend the Grahams have in this realm.

It's not every day that Will and Abigail Graham gets to have an opportunity of meeting Hannibal Lecter again. The possibilities were almost impossible. However, it was not exactly surprising to know that the legendary Hannibal Lecter managed to enjoy physical and mental torture, then rise up the ranks to dominate the system. They, themselves, became Architects; the father-and-daughter duo that can make perfect neighborhoods for good people. One, an

empath who knows what causes nightmares, and one, a Psychiatrist who knows which perfect conditions to expose people. They were the first humans-turned-Architects in the realm.

Upon hearing the news that Hannibal was looking for them, Abigail requested that they make a ploy of cohabitation and become a family. Will Graham agreed, but only to show her Hannibal's disability to love.

After the cohabitation, Abigail was still unsure of Hannibal's real feelings for Will, but it has become more apparent that Will Graham loves the abusive doctor, and it has not sprung from abuse, but from real and unknown affection.

The two men have no concept of healthy love, and their love to one another is toxic to a poetic degree, but Abigail thinks the only romantism they could ever feel belongs to one another. That, itself, is a universal fact.

The Architects of Good Places and Bad Places don't really meet, but something is telling Will that it will not be the last time they meet Hannibal Lecter.

End Notes

Believe me or not, I had planned this to become a full-blown fluff.

Somehow, we always end here.
I promise, nonetheless, the next one will be a fluff.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!